



ABORIGINAL HEALTH WORKERS BOARD OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

NEWSLETTER AUGUST 2011

REGISTRATION RENEWALS DUE BEFORE 30 SEPTEMBER 2011

MEET THE BOARD

Peter Pangquee	Practitioner Member
Shaun Tatipata	Practitioner Member
Karrina DeMasi	Public Member
Louise Dennis	Practitioner Member

BOARD SUPPORT

Jill Huck	State Manager, AHPRA NT
Colette Pethick	Executive Officer, Partially Regulated Professions NT
Eliza Collier	Director Notifications
Sarah McKeiver	A/Registrations Officer

MAIN ITEMS IN THIS NEWSLETTER

- *Moving towards National Registration
- * NT Board's New Physical Address
- *Annual Renewal of Registration
- *Criminal History Declaration
- *Supervision Reports

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

There have been some changes in the NT Board membership. Firstly on behalf of the Board I would like to thank both Sharon Mununggurr (AHW) and Darren Rogers (public member) for their contribution to the Board. Secondly, I welcome Louise Dennis as the newest practitioner member to the Board. Louise resides in Alice Springs and works for Central Australia Remote Health Services. She has joined the Board at a very exciting time and I am confident she will bring many skills to the role.

Aboriginal Health Workers (AHW) in the Northern Territory were first regulated in the Northern Territory in 1985. Since that time there have been many changes including the introduction of National Competency Standards, increased levels of primary qualification that provides entitlement to registration, the transition to regulation under the *Health Practitioners Act* (NT) in 2004. And now the profession is moving towards its inclusion in the national registration and accreditation scheme under the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009* (the National Law) on 1 July 2012.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Board (the National Board), was appointed as of 1 July 2011 and held its first meeting on 26 July 2011.

The Board will be responsible for the regulation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioners (ATSIHP) (including AHW), who meet the criteria for registration, throughout Australia as of 1 July 2012.

The Board's primary focus up to 1 July 2012 is to do the preparatory work for ATSIHP being included in the scheme from 1 July 2012.

This includes development and Ministerial approval of Registration Standards. The process of finalising Standards includes a consultation process. Therefore, I strongly encourage you to access the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) website: www.ahpra.gov.au, frequently over the coming months and forward submissions, detailing your views on the draft documents. Please note, you can also access the National Law on this website.

The Board will also endeavour to communicate with the profession through regular Communiqués, which will be posted on the AHPRA website. Membership of the National Board is by Ministerial appointment and is as follows:

Peter Pangquee (myself) - Chairperson and practitioner member from the NT
Clare Anderson – community member
Karrina Demasi – community member
Sharon Milera – practitioner member from SA
Lisa O'Hara - practitioner member from NSW
Renee Owen – practitioner member from Vic.
Jenny Poelina - practitioner member from WA
Jane Schwager – community member
Karen West – practitioner member from Qld.

The new regulatory model will have a stronger focus on ensuring ATSIHPs participate in continuing professional development (CPD) and can demonstrate recency of practice. Therefore, the NT AHW Board strongly encourages AHW to keep documented records of all CPD activities undertaken and for workplaces to support the maintenance of these records.

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The NT AHW Board will continue to regulate AHW in the NT under the NT legislation until 30 June 2012. There will be transitional arrangements established, to ensure all AHW, who hold registration as of 30 June 2012, are automatically transitioned to the national scheme as of 1 July 2012. Further that any outstanding registrations, conduct or performance matters being considered by the current NT Board, can be finalised under the National Board post 1 July 2012.

Please contact either myself or the Board's Executive Officer, Colette Pethick on the email address on this Newsletter if you require further information in relation to National registration and accreditation or any other issues relating to the regulation of AHW.

On behalf of all the Board members I would I strongly encourage you to read this Newsletter, discuss it with your colleagues and contact the Board if you require clarification.

Peter Pangquee Chairperson

Australian Health Practitioners Regulation Agency (AHPRA) NT - New Address

As of 1 July 2010 the Health Practitioners Licensing Authority (HPLA) ceased to exist. The Board's secretariat and business support is now provided by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency – NT office.

The AHPRA – NT office is located at: **Level 5, The Civitas Building, 22 Harry Chan Avenue Darwin NT 0810** (opposite the Darwin City Council car park and next to the Indonesian Consulate)

Registration Renewal due by: [30/9/2011](#)

Remember to renew your registration by **30 September 2011**. The 'Application for Renewal of Registration' form is enclosed and it will also be available on the Board's website in early September 2011.

Completed applications must be received by the Board, no later than 30 September 2011. **Please note:** Incomplete applications, including those where further information is required, cannot be processed and registration can not be renewed.

Please read the questions carefully and make sure you tick the correct box for each question. Contact the Board if you need

assistance. It may assist you to read the question and ask yourself is the statement true or not (false). Please note the statutory declaration component of the Application form is legally binding and must accurately reflect your situation. Please refer to the explanatory notes included on the form for further information or contact the Board at the address on this Newsletter.

Renew early to avoid the extra worry that comes with forwarding your application at the last minute and the extra cost associated for restoring to the register between 1 October and 31 October 2011.

In regards to declarations of police charges and or criminal convictions, please refer to the information below.

Please note your new practising certificate should specify the expiry date of: 30/11/2012.

Policies and Guidelines

Criminal history checks (Police Check) are now a requirement for registration as an AHW. A number of applications have been delayed awaiting the Police Check so it is advisable to seek the check as soon as possible immediately prior to or at the same time as making an application for registration as an AHW.

The policy was implemented from 1 January 2011. In summary the Board requires all applications for registration to be accompanied by a Criminal History Check and the Board may request a check of an existing registrant when ever it deems appropriate to do so.

AHW seeking to renew registration annually are asked to make a statutory declaration (legally binding declaration) in regards to any charges and or convictions that have not previously been advised.

If you have any charges pending or current and / or any convictions, please provide a written explanation to the Board along with your renewal of registration this year.

The Board encourages you to read this policy and others available on the website.

www.nt.gov.au/health/registrationboards

Unable to access the internet, please phone AHPRA on 08 89018517.

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KNOW YOUR ACT

Aboriginal Health Workers are regulated under the *Health Practitioners Act* (the Act) in the Northern Territory. The purpose of the Act is to ensure public protection. You can access the Act via the Board's website or www.austlii.gov.au

Practising Unlicensed

Section 101 (1)(b) of the *Health Practitioners Act*

Every year the Board becomes aware of a significant number of AHW who have practised unlicensed. This is a breach of Section 101 (1)(b), which states – *It is an offence to practise health care if unregistered: A person must not, carry out an act that by or under an Act is required to be carried out by a health practitioner holding a practising certificate, unless he or she is registered or enrolled and holds a practising certificate.*

Should you find yourself in this situation, it is in the best interest of your patients, yourself and your employer to rectify the situation immediately.

Employers are encouraged to ensure they have appropriate measures in place to ensure they only employ and allow persons to practise who are registered AHWs. Knowingly allowing an unregistered AHW to practise may lead to an employer being in breach of the *Competition and Consumer Act* and / or impact on indemnification arrangements.

Please note - it is the Aboriginal Health Worker's responsibility to ensure that they hold current registration.

SUPERVISION OF AHW

The Board wishes to express its gratitude to the many AHW, registered nurses and medical practitioners who provide supervision of an AHW to meet a Board requirement.

The Board understands that supervision can often be as challenging for the supervisor as for the person being supervised (the supervisee). However, your honest and frank assessment of the supervisee's performance, development and progress is essential information to assist the Board ensure the public is appropriately protected and professional standards are maintained.

The Board has recently developed a 'Supervision Report' format to guide documenting your assessment. This new

document is available on the Board's website. Please feel free to forward the Board your comments in regards to the form or any of the Board's current policies or guidelines.

Notice of Change of Name or Address

Section 46 of the *Health Practitioners Act*

A health practitioner must, within 30 days of changing his or her name, personal address or business address, give the relevant Board notice in writing of the change and the new name or address, as the case may be.

Failure to provide your current address (if you have not done so previously), means you are likely to miss out on renewal notices and other key correspondence from the Board.

Registration Statistics

As at **30 June 2011** the total number of Aboriginal Health Workers was **278 (including 10 with conditional registration)** in the Northern Territory. Last year at this time there were 291 registrants (including 17 with conditional registration).

Scheduled Board Meeting Dates

Please note the Board has limited capacity to address issues outside of a Board meeting. Therefore, it is important to receive all information that you want the Board to consider at least two weeks prior to the scheduled meeting date. Should your matter be urgent please contact the Board as soon as possible.

Dates for the remainder of 2011 are:

20 September 2011 & 8 November 2011.

CONTACT DETAILS

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